

THE MASSACHUSETTS PLOUGHMAN

DEVOTED TO AGRICULTURE, HORTICULTURE, THE FARM, THE GARDEN, AND THE HOUSEHOLD.

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MASSACHUSETTS PLOUGHMAN

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SORREL AND WITCHGRASS.

Among the numerous plants that are troublesome to the farmer and gardener, who takes only ordinary care of his farm and garden, the two that stand at the head of this article occupy the front rank; the most difficult of them to exterminate on the soil, and the most difficult to kill by the application of lime or other deleterious material.

It is not until the land is well manured; but the practical farmer finds that Sorrel will grow luxuriantly where large quantities of lime have been applied to the soil, and also that it will grow very rapidly and of large size on a manure heap.

To conquer and thoroughly exterminate any plant we save time by understanding its manner of growth. The sorrel has two ways of multiplying itself; first, by its numerous seeds; second, by its numerous and rapidly extending roots.

It begins to blossom early in May and ripens its seed in June and July; the seed drops to the ground, and is very sure to germinate in August, the seedling plants will continue to grow until the ground freezes; ordinary hoeing checks its growth but very little; for unless the weather be very dry the plants that are cut off will grow again, and every root that is left in the ground will, in a few days, make another plant; so that every hoeing, in the usual manner will increase the number of plants. It starts so early in the spring that it gets well rooted before the first hoeing, and as the roots come from the bottom of the soil, it seems almost impossible to keep the plants down by frequent hoeing, for the roots are so long and small they cannot be pulled out, and can only be cut below the surface, which leaves the roots to sprout again. By common culture sorrel increases, and as it flourishes remarkably well on grass land, it is not difficult to see how it finds its way to the manure heap, and then all over the farm; in consequence of this, to entirely eradicate it when once it has gained a good hold on a farm requires more than ordinary culture. Who understands the sorrel? Sorrel has better first make his land rich with such fertilizers as will loosen the soil and make it easy to till; and it is best to raise two crops of vegetables in a season, thus requiring cultivation to be kept up throughout the season. July and August are the best months to kill sorrel, as the old roots grow with less vigor in these months and the seedlings are so small that they are very likely to die when hoed up, and as they leave no roots to sprout every time that the land is cultivated, at this season the number of plants is diminished.

The spring cultivation should be so thorough as to give no opportunity for any seed to ripen, and in hoeing, a basket should always be at hand to receive every plant removed, and when all should be emptied where the plants will die, and if any seeds have formed should be buried.

It is only by the most thorough cultivation, and the most persistent efforts that a farm can be cleared of this pest; for while the seeds are in the soil, and the plants are in the ground, it is going to be a constant battle with the sorrel, and it is in the ploughed land, it is growing vigorously on the grass land that is warm and dry, and will make its seed before moving to pass, and a good crop of seed is ripened to pass to mature before the winter, which the following spring is spread on the same fields where the battle was successfully fought the year before; thus requiring the work to be done over again; but as only seedlings are to be conquered the work is more easily done; yet a farm to be entirely freed from sorrel must be thoroughly cultivated for years.

Witchgrass, although troublesome with some crops, with right management is easily conquered on land that is not very stony. It multiplies principally by extending its roots, which grow very rapidly in the spring and the last of the summer and the first of the autumn; the ends of the roots are very hard, pointed and strong, pushing their way through obstacles that almost every other root would turn aside for. We have seen roots of this grass that had pushed their way entirely through a growing potato, and the roots may be cut in short pieces and each piece will grow with vigor if the soil be in good condition, but unlike the sorrel it will not grow on very poor land.

Many farmers do not fully understand the best time or method of ridding their land of this pest, maintain a vigorous warfare against it during the spring months, and ceasing operations at the very time when their work would be the most effectual, the sorrel when autumn comes, to find the enemy as vigorous as ever, and are ready to declare that witchgrass cannot be killed; others spend their time in digging out the roots, which if they do their work thoroughly, is effectual, but the labor is enormous, and by carrying the roots from the ground they carry away much of the richness of the soil; for when this grass has taken possession of the land, the soil is filled with thick matted roots, which if killed and permitted to decompose in the soil will leave it in an excellent condition for almost any crop; so it seems to be the easiest way also think it is the best way to get rid of this pest.

If one has large fields of witchgrass to kill, the best crop to grow is Indian corn. The land should be ploughed but a few days before planting, and it should not be planted before the last of May. As soon as the corn is up it should be hoed, without ploughing, with a very sharp hand hoe, or a sharp wheel hoe, cutting the tops of the grass about an inch below the surface, being careful not to dig any of the roots out so as to leave any of the seeds above ground; hoeing in the same way should be continued once a week until the first of July, being careful to cut the grass as low as possible, and the weeds will begin to wither, and the next hoeing may be delayed until the month of August, and if the time be cut off an inch below the surface at this time it is pretty sure to shoot to the surface before it can send a shoot to the surface; the weather is so hot it becomes decomposed, to make a sure thing of it, it is best to go over the ground again in about a week and cut off whatever sprouts may have been overlooked, or by any chance may have sprouted. If care is taken to keep all of the roots under ground for a week or ten days during the last of July and the first of August, the work of destruction will be complete; and the next spring when the ground is ploughed, if the roots were very thick, it will have the appearance of peat, but will decompose more readily.

As we have had many pieces of land of witchgrass in this way, we assure that we have proved to be true by practical tests.

CRANBERRY CULTURE.

Thousands of acres of swamp and bog lands in Massachusetts which are now regarded as almost worthless, might, with a moderate outlay of labor and money be made exceedingly valuable and productive. In many localities farmers are availing themselves of the golden opportunity, and are converting their unprofitable swamps into rich paying cranberry plantations, and it is to be hoped that their example will be long largely followed.

To establish a successful cranberry meadow it is essential that the land should possess facilities for securing drainage, together with available water for flowing when occasion requires. If these conditions can be secured, and we venture to state that they are available in at least one-half of our swamps and bog lands, there is nothing to prevent the establishment of plantations.

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MARKET GARDENING.

Editor Massachusetts Ploughman:

There is nothing that appears more interesting to us than a good crop of ripe melons, and we are not alone in this feeling. It is made to pay as well as any other crop with the same amount of labor. Of course we cannot get them as early in Massachusetts as they can in the South, but one good-sized melon, fresh from the vines, is worth two that I ever saw brought from abroad. I find very little trouble in getting the Mountain Sweet variety up to 25 pounds. I do not presume to teach, but would advise to let but one plant stand in a hill. I find the vines will cover the ground at eight feet apart, and should not be planted closer than twelve feet. I often hear people complain that their seed does not germinate; they are apt to charge the seed dealer with putting up poor seed; but I have experimented with both deep and shallow sowing, and find that the best method is to plant them twelve feet apart. I often hear people complain that their seed does not germinate; they are apt to charge the seed dealer with putting up poor seed; but I have experimented with both deep and shallow sowing, and find that the best method is to plant them twelve feet apart. I often hear people complain that their seed does not germinate; they are apt to charge the seed dealer with putting up poor seed; but I have experimented with both deep and shallow sowing, and find that the best method is to plant them twelve feet apart.

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Directory Column.

PROMINENT BUSINESS HOUSES.

The Business Houses appearing under the Directory Column in this column are the most reliable in the city.

AUCTIONEERS.

STEVENS & CO. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

AWKINGS, TENTS & FLAGS.

AWKINGS, TENTS & FLAGS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

ACCOUNT BOOK MANUFACTURERS.

ACCOUNT BOOK MANUFACTURERS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

APOTHECARIES.

APOTHECARIES. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

ARTISTS MATERIALS.

ARTISTS MATERIALS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

BEER AND PORT.

BEER AND PORT. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

BUTTER, CHEESE AND EGGS.

BUTTER, CHEESE AND EGGS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

COFFEE AND TEA.

COFFEE AND TEA. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

CARPETINGS.

CARPETINGS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

COMMISSION PRODUCE.

COMMISSION PRODUCE. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

COCKEY, CHINA AND GLASS.

COCKEY, CHINA AND GLASS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

DRY GOODS.

DRY GOODS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

DYE HOUSES.

DYE HOUSES. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

PICKLED SALT FISH.

PICKLED SALT FISH. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

ENGRAVING CHROMES, ETC.

ENGRAVING CHROMES, ETC. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

FERTILIZERS.

FERTILIZERS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

FRUIT AND PRODUCE.

FRUIT AND PRODUCE. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

FURNITURE AND CARPETS.

FURNITURE AND CARPETS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

GAS FIXTURES, LAMPS, CHANDELIERS, ETC.

GAS FIXTURES, LAMPS, CHANDELIERS, ETC. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

HAIRDRESSERS.

HAIRDRESSERS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

HEADWEAR DEALERS.

HEADWEAR DEALERS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

READERS FOR NOVELTIES AND AGENTS' GOODS.

READERS FOR NOVELTIES AND AGENTS' GOODS. 100 N. B. St. Boston.

KNIFE DEALERS.

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NEW ENGLAND AGRICULTURAL SOCIETY.

FOR THE YEAR 1876.

As established by the New York State Agricultural Society, 1853.

POINTS IN A SHORTHORN COW.

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POINTS IN THE JERSEY COW.

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